



Private Hubert Webb



Photo of Private Webb taken shortly after he graduated from Engineer training.

Late in the fall of 1944, a patrol of 23 infantrymen and 8 Engineers was sent on a mission across the Saar River to capture an enemy prisoner. The patrol was evenly split between two assault boats. Under the cover of darkness and a rainstorm, the patrol left friendly positions. The patrol managed to reach the far shore, where four Engineers, including Hubert A. Webb, remained with the boats while the rest of the force sought out a prisoner.

The patrol found the enemy's defensive line too strong. Dawn was quickly approaching, so the infantry decided to call off the patrol and return to the boats. Shortly after beginning the return trip, an infantry soldier stepped on a mine. The resulting havoc erased all

sense of order among the infantry and aroused the German defenders. Two more infantrymen stepped on mines as the patrol raced for the boats.

Two of the wounded were placed in Webb's boat and the group quickly set out for the safety of the far shore. A little over half-way across, the boat was pulled against the column of a destroyed railroad bridge. The boat spiraled into a whirlpool. After spinning violently for a short time, the boat collided with a large log. The force smashed the boat into pieces which quickly sank. Webb grabbed one of the wounded men and pushed him up onto the debris piled around the bridge column.

The survivors were stranded on the enemy side of the bridge for five days. The morning of the fifth day dawned foggy. Webb spotted an assault boat that had floated downriver and lodged in a debris pile close to the shore. Webb swam into the river and retrieved the assault boat and seven paddles.

On the sixth night, the patrol loaded the two wounded men into the repaired boat and pushed it approximately 75 yards up stream. The Engineers pushed the boat as far as possible into the river, then mounted the boat and rowed as hard as they could. The beleaguered patrol reached the friendly shore near the abutment of the damaged bridge. Mustering what little energy their half-starved bodies contained they attempted to carry the two wounded infantrymen up the river bank. The survivors finally got lucky, and stumbled into a friendly patrol.

By fulfilling his obligations to his unit, and the infantry unit he was supporting, Private Webb exemplified the Army Value of Duty. For his actions Private Webb was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

